

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 MC-02

EB-08 SY-05 DEAE-00 SNM-02 AID-05 ACDA-07 /085 W

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FM AMEMBASSY MEXICO

TO US TREASURY DEPT WASHDC

US CUSTOMS HQ WASHDC

SECSTATE WASHDC 9901

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EO 11652: NA

TAGS: OTRA PFOR MX

SUBJECT: VISIT OF US COMMISSIONER OF CUSTOMS VERNON D. ACREE

1. ON JAN. 18, 1977, US CUSTOMS SERVICE COMMISSIONER VERNON D. ACREE, ASST COMMISSIONER (INVESTIGATIONS) GEORGE C. CORCORAN AND CUSTOMS ATTACHE, MEXICO CITY, MET WITH MEXICAN DIRECTOR GENRAL OF CUSTOMS LIC. LEOPOLDO RAMIREZ LIMON AND HIS STAFF.

2. IMPLEMENTATION OF RECENTLY SIGNED CUSTOMS-TO-CUSTOMS AGREE-MENT WAS TOPIC OF DISCUSSION. DURING THIS MEETING LIC. RAMIREZ RAISED QUESTION OF ARMS SMUGGLING AND RECENT PUBLICITY GENERATED BY SENATE COMMITTEE HEARINGS IN WASHDC. LIC. RAMIREZ PLEDGED FULL COOPERATION WITH US CUSTOMS IN INVESTIGATING AND SURPRESSING ARMS SMUGGLING, HOWEVER, HE NOTED THAT PICTURE PAINTED BY RECENT TESTIMONY IN WASHDC SEEMED TO EXAGGERATE SITUATION. HE ALSO COMMENTED ON OTHER ADVERSE PUBLICITY RECENTLY DIRECTED AT MEXICO REGARDING DANGER TO TOURISTS IN STATE OF SINALOA AND SOLICITED COMMISSIONER ACREE'S SUGGESTIONS ON WHAT CUSTOMS SERVICE MIGHT DO TO DEAL WITH THESE PROBLEMS. MEXICAN CUSTOMS WILL CONTINUE TO FURNISH US CUSTOMS ATTACHE WITH LISTS OF WEAPONS SEIZED BY THEIR PERSONNEL.

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3. ON THIS SAME DATE COMMISSIONER ACREE MET WITH CHARGE HERBERT B. THOMPSON AT AMERICAN EMBASSY. MR. THOMPSON WAS BRIEFED ON DEVELOPMENTS WITHIN US CUSTOMS SERVICE AS WELL AS RECENT TESTIMONY GIVEN BEFORE SENATE PERMANENT SUB-COMMITTEE ON INVESTIGATIONS REGARDING ARMS SMUGGLING FROM US TO MEXICO. MR. THOMPSON WAS GIVEN COPIES OF TESTIMONY GIVEN IN OPEN

SESSION BY MESSRS. REX DAVIS, PETER BENSINGER AND COMMISSIONER ACREE.

4. ON AFTERNOON OF JAN. 18, 1977, COMMISSIONER ACREE MET WITH MEXICAN ATTORNEY GENERAL LIC. OSCAR FLORES SANCHEZ AND AGAIN DISCUSSED SUBJECT OF ARMS SMUGGLING TO MEXICO. LIC. FLORES STATED THAT HE DOES NOT BELIEVE THAT THERE IS ANY SIGNIFICANT LARGE SCALE ARMS FOR NARCOTICS TRADE IN MEXICO; THAT NARCOTICS IS BIG BUSINESS AND MAJOR TRANSACTIONS INVOLVE MONEY, NOT ARMS. HE POINTED OUT THAT MEXICO'S RESTRICTIVE LAWS MADE IT NEARLY IMPOSSIBLE TO PURCHASE FIREARMS HERE AND THEREFORE NEARLY EVERYONE, INCLUDING LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS, OFTEN SEEK TO PURCHASE GUNS THROUGH ILLEGAL CHANNELS. HE FURTHER NOTED THAT HE DOESN'T BELIEVE NARCOTICS TRAFFICKERS OR TERRORIST/OUTLAW GROUPS ARE ARMING THEMSELVES WITH INTENTION OF OPPOSING GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS, BUT RATHER THAT THEY, LIKE MANY LEGITIMATE MEXICAN CITIZENS, ACQUIRE FIREARMS PRIMARILY FOR PERSONAL PROTECTION, AS KEEPSAKES, ETC.

5. LIC. FLORES WAS ENTHUSIASTIC ABOUT COORDINATING ANY INTELLIGENCE US CUSTOMS MIGHT HAVE ON THIS SUBJECT AND DESIGNATED LIC. FERNANDO BAEZA MELENDEZ AS US CUSTOMS ATTACHE'S CONTACT IN THESE MATTERS. LIC. FLORES PROMISED TO CONTINUE FURNISHING US CUSTOMS WITH LISTS OF FIREARMS SEIZED BY HIS OFFICE.

6. LIC. FLORES COMMENTED THAT HE WOULD PREFER TO DEAL WITH SINGLE US GOVERNMENT REP WHENEVER POSSIBLE IN COORDINATING LAW ENFORCEMENT MATTERS.

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7. COMMISSIONER ACREE'S VIIT WITH MEXICAN OFFICIALS CAME AT OPPORTUNE TIME AND HELPED TO ASSURE GOM OF US GOVT'S POSITIVE ATTITUDE IN HELPING TO CURTAIL ILLEGAL EXPORTATION OF ARMS AND AMMUNITION OUT OF US.
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Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
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